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Ceremony Marks Construction Start Of USS Hawaii

Hawaii's Governor Joins R.I. Officials For Keel-Laying

POSTED: 12:31 pm EDT August 27, 2004

UPDATED: 1:16 pm EDT August 27, 2004

NORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. -- The governor of Hawaii joined Rhode Island officials Friday for a keel-laying ceremony for the USS Hawaii nuclear submarine.

The ceremony was held at the Electric Boat facility at Quonset Point, where work on the submarine is beginning. The time-honored tradition had to be changed slightly because submarines don't have keels.

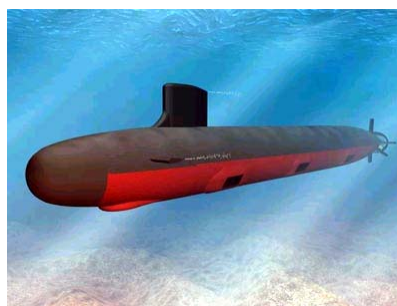
Gov. Linda Lingle signed her initials on a piece of steel that will be incorporated into the submarine. A welder used his torch to inscribe them permanently on the metal.

Construction of the Hawaii will also take place at EB's shipyards in Groton, Conn., and Newport News, Va.

The Hawaii is the third ship in the Navy's newest class of nuclear attack submarines. The Virginia-class submarine will cost about \$2 billion. It will be 377 feet long and weigh about 7,800 tons.

The sub is set for completion at the end of 2006.

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An artist's conception of the Virginia-class submarine.

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